

THE
S U M M
O F A
CONFERENCE

On *Feb. 21. 1686.*

BETWEEN

Dr. Clagett, and Father Gooden,

About the Point of

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *William Rogers*, at the *Sun*
over-against *St. Dunstan's Church* in
Fleetstreet. MDC LXXXIX.

ERRATA.

Page vi. l. 4. for *mer. us.* *ib.* l. 6. for *me r. us.* p. viii.
 l. 4. r. a greater thing than the Representers answering,
 &c. p. 2. after l. 13. add, Now against This, I thus
 argue, p. 2. l. 14. add in the beginning Dr.

C

Dr.

TRA

I

was c
 the S
 Gentle
 ons in

The SUM of a
CONFERENCE
 On *Feb. 21. 1686.*

BETWEEN

Dr. Clagett, and Father Gooden,

About the POINT of

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

Introduction.

I *T will perhaps appear to some a little strange, that I do not say almost Incredible, that there should have pass'd a Conference above two years since, in which Mr. Gooden was concern'd, and the World yet to learn the Substance of it. The Vanity of that Gentleman to thrust himself upon all Occasions into Disputes with the most Learned*

Men of our Church first, and then to boast of his own Performances in them, was so great, that there is scarce a Coffee-house in the Town that has not been filled with the Noise of his Impertinent Vapours. And if those of the Other Communion have been always remarkable for an Assurance becoming the pretended Infallibility of their Church; I may venture to say, that next to Father P—the Jesuit, and his friend Mr. M——, I scarce know any among them that have ever talk'd so loud, or made such Heroical Defiances of the Champions and Armies of our Israel, in all Places, and upon all Occasions, as Mr. Gooden these late Years has done among us. But thus shallow Waters always run with the Greatest Noise and Violence; and little Sophisters, who either want Capacity to see into their own Fallacies, or think they have forehead enough to carry that off with Clamour and Confidence which they cannot do by Reason and Argument, delight to expose themselves and their Religion to the most dangerous Tryals; whilst Men of Learning and Judgment are modest and ingenuous, and know it to be neither for the Honour of their Church, nor their own Reputation, to challenge all Mankind to answer Paradoxes, and to shew that not to be Demonstration,

which

The Introduction.

V

which when brought to the Tryal is hardly
sence.

See Mr.
G's Pap

I hope will this not be thought too severe
a Reflection on the late Pretenders of this
kind among us, which I speak out of a just
respect to the more Learned and Charitable
Persons of the Church of Rome; who
have been no less Scandalized at these fir-
ward Zealots, than our selves; and to whom
I ought to give this Testimony, That during
a long acquaintance with many of them, I
never met with any thing of the Vanity
of those I have before mentioned. Our
Differences in matters of Religion, made
no Disturbance either in our Friendship or
Conversation with One Another. If the
discourse at any time led to a Controversie
of Faith, we argu'd it upon the same Prin-
ciples, and with the same Calmness, that
we did any other Subject whatsoever; by
Arguments drawn from the Authority of the
Holy Scriptures, or from the Testimonies
of the Ancient Fathers, as the Nature of
the thing required us to do. If these did
not Convince, they never flew off to the
Common Place Topic's of the Authority
and Infallibility of the Church; much less
to that Exploded refuge of Oral Tradition;
but the Controversie Ended. And when
all was done, they were content to be well

of those of our Church, who being sincere in their Enquiries, and willing to be led by Truth wherever it was, still continued to differ from them. Instead of calling Me a Heretick or Schismatick, or Thundring out Damnation against Me as such, a mutual Charity concluded the discourse. We hoped and prayed for the Conviction of the Erring Party, which ever it was ; but made no question, but that the same Heaven might receive us All, tho we should continue to disagree to the last.

But this was not the Temper of Mr. Gooden, and the rest of the little Herd of that Church, who gave so much Trouble and Disturbance to their own and the Nations repose ; and have contributed what in them lies by their Heat and Folly, to ruin both themselves and

As for the Occasion of the present Conference, it was this. A Gentlewoman of a Good Estate, and intimately acquainted with divers R. Cs. was by a frequent Conversation with them, wrought up by degrees into an Extraordinary Opinion of the advantages of a Recluse Life, for the better performing the Exercises of Religion; Insomuch that the desire she began to have for such a sort of retirement, made her almost willing to leave our Church, and go

over

over to the Roman Communion ; but that she still look'd upon their Doctrine, in those points wherein they differ from us, to be False, and Dangerous, and to one so perswaded as she was, Destructive of Salvation.

Being thus prepared for their Seduction ; they let slip no Opportunity to finish their work, and gain their Proselyte. For which purpose, care was taken, first by one of Her Acquaintance, to represent to Her all the Popular Pretences of that Church, by which many are Prejudiced in Favour of it ; and the Advantages it Had, in point of Antiquity, Unity, Universality, Infallibility, and what not, beyond Ours ; and then, in the next place, to get Father Gooden brought to Her, as one that would give Her a fuller satisfaction in all these matters, if she would but afford him the Opportunity of Discoursing with Her. And to the End his Arguments might make the deeper Impression upon Her, it was thought fit to set forth the Priest to Her ; not in the Glorious Idea of the Great Master of Demonstration, one who had devoured all Mr. I. Ss. Principles, and was thereby become such a Mighty Man of Controversy, that none of our Divines durst Cope with him ; He in whose hands the Dean of Pauls

himself was nothing, who had a certain Paper that in a few lines baffled all that could be said or written in favour of the Reformation, (which was a greater thing, answering in a few sheets all the Books and Sermons that had ever been publish'd or preach'd against them); But in the humble Character of a Countrey Priest, a little, inconsiderable man amongst them; and his Dress was accommodated to his Character, that so under this disguise he might talk with the greater Advantage to her.

But Mr. Gooden forgetting the person he had put on, presently fell into his usual strain. He began to talk of nothing but Infallibility, Antiquity, Demonstration: That all the Fathers and Councils were on their side: That he had baffled our most considerable Divines, and particularly the Dean of Pauls; who had in truth all of them so little to say for themselves when he came amongst them, that he desired nothing more to convince her of the Truth of their Doctrines, than that she would pitch upon some Point, and bring one of our Men to meet him, and she should see what work he would make with him.

Such a noise as this from one of the little, inconsiderable Priests of the Church of Rome, amazed the poor Lady: and had he prudently

Prudently contented himself with the Boast of the Victories he had already gain'd, without aspiring after the Honour of adding one more for the increasing his Triumph, he might possibly have saved himself from the shame of that discovery the following Conference made of his Abilities, and have gain'd his Profelyte. But as great Wits are too often a little inconsiderate; and, before they are aware, run themselves into difficulties, out of which they cannot tell afterwards how to extricate themselves; so it fell out with Mr. Gooden on this Occasion. For the Lady presently took hold on his Offer, and applied her self to Dr. Claggett; and the Time, and Place, and Subject being fix'd, Mr. Gooden and the Doctor met accordingly at Grays-Inn, Feb. 21. 1686.

I shall say nothing of the Menage of the Conference its self, but that it was with much Noise on Mr. Gooden's side; who in Discourse let fall some very extraordinary things, and which might have pass'd into the Abstract too, had not another Person who was with him, and seem'd much more modest and understanding than himself, observed what pass'd, and corrected his Blunders.

After the Dispute was ended, which lasted about Four or Five Hours, a new Discourse

The Introduction.

Discourse arose about the Paper which Mr. Gooden made such Boasts of about the Town, and had so often represented to the Lady and others, as unanswerable. He was very unwilling a great while to let the Doctor have a Copy of it, tho he promised to give him an Answer to it ; till at last it was declared, That if he refused to let him have it, the Company would look upon it as an idle Paper, that had nothing in it, and that therefore he durst not trust him with it. Upon this he gave him a Copy of it, and the Doctor in pursuance of his Promise, the next day sent him the following Answer to it.

For what concerns the Sum of the Conference here Published, it was taken in Writing, and signed by both Parties upon the place ; so that there can be no cause for any one to question the sincerity of it : And tho the Abstract be very short, yet I am persuaded it is enough to satisfy every impartial Reader, why Mr. Gooden did not care to make any boasts of it. And those who were present at the Meeting, and heard all that pass'd between them, as well as the Lady for whose sake they met, were very well satisfied that he would not force them to publish the History of it.

But tho the Doctor was willing to let this matter die, and shew'd himself as careful of Mr. Gooden's Reputation after the Conference, as he was of the Ladies Conviction in it; yet being now by the Providence of God removed from us, I thought it a just debt to his Memory, to subjoin here a true Copy of these Papers, there being several of them abroad, both to prevent an imperfect Edition from some other hand; and lest Mr. Gooden and his Friends, who were so silent in his Life-time, should take occasion to raise any false Reports of this Encounter, if they thought they could not be disproved now he is dead. And if the great Esteem I had for that Excellent Person, and most useful Instrument of God's Service, in our late dangerous and critical Times, does not render me a very incompetent judg of whatever comes from his hand, the Reader will find even in these short Notes, enough to reward his Pains, and to keep him from thinking the time lost that he shall please to spend in the perusal of them.

13

... ..

Dr

wa
wa

we
St

at
tu
m

A
Private Conference

BETWEEN

Dr. Clagett, and Father Gooden,

ABOUT

Transubstantiation, &c.

FATHER Gooden Proposed the *Rule of Faith*, to be the Subject of the Conference; but upon the Request of the Lady, for whose sake it was, the Question of *Transubstantiation* was taken.

And the Father desiring that the *Doctor* would be the *Opponent*, the *Question* was Stated on both Sides.

Dr. That the *Doctrine of Transubstantiation* is *false Doctrine*; and, That the *Natural Body of Christ* is not in the *Sacrament*, but in *Heaven*.

F. That

A Private Conference between

Fa. That after the Words of Consecration, the true Body and Blood of Christ are in the Holy Eucharist, and that the manner is well exprest by Transubstantiation.

Dr. This is not all the Doctrine of Transubstantion in the Church of Rome, the Doctrine of the Church of Rome is this, That the Substance of the Bread is chang'd into the Substance of Christ's Body: and the Substance of the Wine is chang'd into the Substance of Christ's Blood; which Change the Church of Rome does conveniently call Transubstantiation.

If the Substance of Bread remains in the Eucharist, then it is not chang'd into the Substance of Christ's Body;

But the Substance of Bread remains in the Eucharist:

Therefore the Substance of Bread is not changed into the Substance of Christ's Body.

Fath. I deny the Minor (viz) that the Substance of Bread does remain.

Dr. If Bread remains, the substance of bread remains.

But Bread remains.

Therefore the substance of bread remains.

Fa. If

Dr. Clagett and F. Gooden.

3

Fath. If the *Nature of Bread* remains, *Bread* remains ; but if only the *Name of Bread* and *Species* remain, then *Bread* does not remain.

Dr. That *Bread* which is properly *Natural Bread*, remains in the *Eucharist*, is proved from 1 Cor. 11. 26. *As often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come.* 1 Cor. 10. 16. *The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* Now from hence we argue thus: If that which is here said to be *Broken*, and to be the *Communion of the Body of Christ*, be properly *natural Bread*, then that which is properly *natural Bread*, remains in the *Eucharist*.

Fath. I grant the *Major*.

Dr. But that which is here said to be *broken*, and to be the *Communion of the Body of Christ*, is properly *natural Bread*,

Ergo: Properly *natural Bread* remains in the *Eucharist*.

Fath. I deny the *Minor*.

Dr. The *Bread* of which Saint Paul speaks, is *Bread* that may be *broken*, and therefore it is *truely* and *properly natural Bread*.

Fath. I

A Private Conference between

Fath. I distinguish the *Antecedent*; as to the *Accidents* and *Appearance* of *Bread* it may be *broken*; as to the *Nature* of *Bread* it cannot, because it is not there.

Dr. This is to beg the *Question*; for the *Question* is, whether *Bread* be there or not? and the *Argument* to prove that it is there, is, Because Saint *Paul* speaks of *Bread* that might be, and was *broken*; but it is no sufficient *Answer* to this, to say that the *Accidents* of *Bread* may be *broken*, because the *Bread* is not there it self, which is the *thing* that was disproved.

Fath. The *Question* to be proved was, that the *Nature* of *Bread* was there; therefore it is not a begging of the *Question*, according to the *Distinction* given, to say that the *Nature* of *Bread* is not there, and consequently could not be *broken*: For the *Bread* there spoken of, is not meant of *Natural Bread*, but of *Bread* which came down from *Heaven*, and which is the *flesh* of *Christ*, John 6. 41. *I am the bread which came down from Heaven.* John 6. 48. *I am the bread of Life,* Ver. 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58. From whence I infer my *Answer* to be good; that though the *H. Eucharist* be called *Bread*, and *broken* as to the *Species* of *Bread*; yet it is not *natural Bread*, but only in *appearance*, of which

St. Paul

St. Paul spoke; for the same St. Paul, 1 Cor. 11. speaking of the same bread, saith, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the body of our Lord.* Christ also speaking of the same bread, saith, *Take, eat, this is my Body,* Matt. 26. 26. Also Luk. 22. 19. speaking of the same Eucharist, *This is my Body which is given for you.*

Dr. The Answerer forgetting the Part of a Disputant, has pretended to prove largely by the *sixth Chap. of St. John*, and other places of *Scripture*, That St. Paul in the aforementioned places, did not speak of *Bread properly so called*, although he spoke of *Bread* that was to be broken. All which places, when it is my turn to Answer, I will consider particularly.

But if that which is here said is to go for an Answer, the force of it lies in this, That by the *Bread* which St. Paul spoke of, we are to understand the *Bread* which St. John spoke of, namely, the *bread which came down from Heaven*; by which the Answerer understands the *Natural and proper flesh of Christ*.

But that the *Bread* which St. Paul speaks of cannot be the *natural flesh of Christ*, I prove thus;

K k

The

A Private Conference between

The *Bread* which St. Paul speaks of, was broken.

But the *Natural Body of Christ* cannot be broken.

Ergo. The *Bread* which St. Paul speaks of cannot be the *Natural body of Christ*.

Fath. As to the *Species and Appearance of Bread*, it was broken, I grant it; as to any *Nature* contained under those *Species of Bread*, I deny it.

Dr. This *Distinction* does not avoid the *Argument*, because if the *Bread* in St. Paul and the *Bread* in St. John are really and properly the same, and the *Bread* in St. John be really and properly the *flesh of Christ*, then what is affirmed of the one, must be true of the other, and therefore if the *Bread* be broken in St. Paul, then the *Natural body of Christ* must be broken too; which cannot be.

I add further, That if by *breaking of Bread* St. Paul means *breaking the Accidents of Bread* only; and if the *Bread* that is broken be really that which is spoken of in St. John as aforesaid; it follows also that the *Accidents of Bread* are properly the *body of Christ*.

Fath. That which St. Paul calls *Bread*, had in it both the *Accidents of Bread* and the *substance of Christ's body*. As to the

Acci-

Accidents of Bread, it might be *broken*; as to the *substance of Christ's body* which is mentioned in *St. John*, it is not *broken*, unless you mean as *Christ's Body* was broken upon the *Cross*.

"And if the bread which is broken be really that which is spoken of in *St. John* as aforesaid, both as to the *Accidents* and nature of *Bread*, I grant, that the *Accidents of Bread* would be the *Body of Christ*; and if it be not the same, both as to the *Nature* and *Accidents*, I deny it.

This I profess not to understand.

Fath. As to the *Doctor's Argument* it includes a *Sophism*, as will appear when brought into form, because it involves 4 *Terms*; because he supposes in one *Proposition* for the *Accidents of Bread* and in the other for the *Nature*.

Dr. In the *Argument* I used, I went upon this *Supposition*, That the *Accidents of Bread* were onely to be understood, as the *Answerer* supposes, and therefore I have not confounded the *Nature* and the *Accidents of Bread* together. Besides, the *Distinction* between the *Nature of Bread* and the *Accidents of Bread*, was not to be remembred any more by the *Answerer*, because I proceed upon his *Supposition*, That the *Accidents* onely are *broken*.

A Private Conference between

Now if St. Paul speaks of nothing but what is *broken*, and *Accidents* onely are *broken*, and yet if he speaks of the *very flesh of Christ* too, then the *Accidents* of the *Bread* are the *very flesh of Christ*.

And whereas the *Answerer* by his last *Answer*, means the *Nature of Christ's Body*, as he says, I understood him of the *Nature of Bread*. And now once more I desire him to shew me where the four *Terms* are.

Fath. The *Text* of St. Paul, the Dr. takes for his Medium, and argues from a double *Supposition*, as first, taking it for the *Accidents of Bread* which were *broken*, and afterwards for the *substance of Christ's Body* under the *Accidents*, in which latter sense it signifies the same that is meant by our Saviour in St. John.

Dr. I observe the *Answerer* will allow nothing to be *broken* but *Accidents*; I observe also, that nothing is said to be the *Body of Christ*, or the *Communion of the Body of Christ*, but what is *broken*; if therefore nothing is *broken* but *Accidents*, then *Accidents* are either, according to the *Answerer's* long proof, the *very Body of Christ*; or according to the *Apostle*, the *Communion of the Body of Christ*.

But neither are the *Accidents* of Bread, the *Body of Christ*, nor the *Communion of the Body*

Body
sweet
by a
does
F
supp
brea
whic
of B
the
clear
derst
vate
to pr
evide
such,
Reade
from
Churc
bly ha
sian
terpre
Certai
nian,
Faith,
other
I see no
W. Clay
Body

Body of Christ. And this, I say, is not answered, and believe will not be answered by any man that maintains, that *St. Paul* does not here speak properly of *Bread*.

Fath. All along in my Discourse I have supposed, that when *St. Paul* speaks of this bread, he spoke of the *H. Eucharist*, in which were contained both the *Accidents of Bread*, and the *true body of Christ*. How the *Dr.* has disproved this *Doctrine* so clearly as to justify the *Reformation*, I understand not ; Because, I conceive no private Persons, or particular Church, ought to pretend a *Reformation*, without clear evidence ; whether the *Dr.* has given such, I leave to the consideration of the *Readers*. And whether, having broken off from the great body of the *Universal Church*, and its testimony, he can possibly have any certain Rule to arrive at *Christian Faith* ? If *Scripture* be pretended, interpreted by a fallible Authority, how Certainty can be obtained, or why a *Sociinian*, following *Scripture* for his Rule of Faith, is not to be believed as well as any other Reformer following the same Rule, I see not.

Signed

W. Clagett.

Peter Gooden.

K k 3

Dr.

Dr. CLAGETT's Answer

T O A

P A P E R Delivered to Him by
Father G O O D E N.

The Paper

Articles of Christian Faith are Truths ; Truths are Impossible to be False ; Therefore Articles of Christian Faith are Impossible to be False ; Therefore those who obtain Articles of the Christian Faith, must have some Rule to Acquire them by, which cannot deceive them : To a Parliamentary Protestant, the Ancient Fathers cannot be such a Rule, because they are accounted Fallible ; Nor Councils, because they also are accounted Fallible ; Nor Scriptures sensed by a Fallible Authority, because all such Interpretations may be False ; And therefore Faith cannot be Obtained by any such means. In that which is Doubtfull can only Create Opinion, which is also Doubtful ; And He that doubts in Faith, (the Apostle says) is Infidelis ; And a Company of Doubters are not a Church of Faithful, but a Society of such as the Apostle calls Infidels.

Signed Peter Gooden.

THE

The Answer.

Pap. *Articles of Christian Faith are Truths.*

Ans. The Design of the Disputer is to prove, that we are *Doubters* and therefore *Infidels*; But never did any man begin a business more unluckily, for at the very first dash he takes it for granted; that we do *undoubtedly believe Articles of Christian Faith to be Truths*; for otherwise he ought to have proved that they are so. But there is another Misfortune he is fallen into, no less than that; for his Argument to prove that we must needs be *Doubters*, is, that we want an *Infallible Rule*. Now if he is sure that we want an *Infallible Rule*, and that without such a *Rule* there can be no Faith, I am sure he does notoriously contradict himself, by supposing that we believe all *Articles of Christian Faith to be Truths*, though we have no such *Rule*. This is a very hopeful Paper, and like to make wise *Converts*, which ends in making us *Infidels*, and begins to prove it by an Argument, that manifestly supposes Us to be *Believers*; which also pretends that we have no *Infallible Rule*, and therefore can be sure of no *Point of Faith*; but yet manifestly supposes Us to be *Assured* of *Some* without it; which shews the Paper to be a trifling Paper, and worth no more Consideration. But because the Disputer is said to boast so much of the Argument Contained in it, I will go on with every Clause of it to Convince him, (if he does not already know it,) that there is not a Line in it, but is either false, or nothing to the purpose.

Pap. *Truths are Impossible to be False.*

Ans. By *Truths*, the Disputer means, the

Truth of Things, or of Propositions, and therefore this is a vain and fulsome saying, which does not Advance his Reasoning one jot farther than it was before : For this is no more than to say, That which is true, is true, and it cannot possibly be, but truths must be truths. I think he applies himself to us, as if we wanted not only Christian Faith, but Common sense.

Pap. Therefore Articles of Christian Faith are Impossible to be False.

Ans. There is no doubt of this, supposing that they are Truths. So that the Argument he begins with being put into the right order, and into other words, is this; It is Impossible but truths must be truths, but Articles of Christian Faith are Truths; Therefore it is Impossible but they must be Truths. The Ancient Fathers had made wise work with Christianity, if they had gone this way to work to Convert Infidels.

Pap. Therefore those who obtain the Articles of the Christian Faith, must have some Rule to acquire them by, which cannot deceive them.

Ans. This is an obscure saying, and I must make the best of it. By obtaining Articles of the Christian Faith, I suppose he means believing them, and by a Rule by which to acquire them, He must understand a Rule, or means whereby to know what the Articles of the Christian Faith are; and then his meaning is, That those who believe the Articles of the Christian Faith, must be provided of some such Rule or Means, to know what they are, as cannot deceive them. Now whether this be in it self true or false, it does not at all follow from what he had laid down before; For though the Truth of Things or Propositions is

so sure, that (as he wisely says) 'tis Impossible they should be false, yet it does by no means follow, that the *Reasons* upon which I believe these things must necessarily be as sure as the Truth of the Things themselves. And this I make no doubt the Disputer was well aware of; But because I am sensible who they are whom he designs to pervert by this *Paper*, and for whose sake I Answer it, I will explain this matter by an Instance that will bring it down to all Capacities : If there was such a man as *Henry the 8th*, It is certainly *Impossible* that there should be no such man ; but my *Belief* that there was such a *Man*, is groundèd upon such *Reasons* as do not imply an absolute Impossibility of the Contrary, because it is groundèd upon the *Testimony* of *Fallible men* : And yet I should be very little better then a mad-man if I should entertain the least doubt that there was such a man : which plainly shews, that I may have sufficient Reason to believe a thing without any Evidence of the Impossibility of the contrary ; and this is enough to overthrow his *Consequence*. I shall now inquire what truth there is in the *Conclusion* it self ; To which end I observe, That there are two things which may be understood by those words, *cannot deceive them*, either first, that the *Rule* it self is so plain and certain, that no man who uses it can be deceived by the *Rule* ; or secondly, that 'tis Impossible any man should be mistaken in the *Use* of it. If he means the former, then I shall shew him presently, that we have such a *Rule* as he speaks of, and that he hath said nothing to make us ashamed of it. If he means the latter, then I say it is absolutely false, That those
who

who without doubting *believe* the *Articles of the Christian Faith*, must have such a *Rule* to know what they are, as that they cannot possibly mistake in the *Use* of it. To make which plain to every bodies understanding, I shall add another Instance easy to be Applied; If a man skilful in *Arithmetick* hath a great many *Numbers* before him, and desires to know what *Sum* they make when they are put together; he has the *Rule of Addition* to do it by, which *Rule* cannot deceive him. Now there are these two things to be observed farther, which I think the *Disputter* himself will not deny; first, that it is in the Nature of the thing Possible, that this man may be mistaken every time that he puts these several *Numbers* together, to bring them all into one *Sum*; but secondly, that notwithstanding this Possibility of being mistaken, yet after he has tryed it over and over again, he may be sure without the least doubt that he has done his work right. Even so we may have a *Rule of Faith* that cannot deceive us, and though it is not *Absolutely Impossible*, that we should be mistaken in the *use* of it; yet we may for all that be Assured, and believe without the least doubting, that we have learn'd what the true Faith is by that *Rule*; For all the World knows, that it is no sufficient Reason to *Doubt* of any thing, that the Contrary is barely Possible.

Pap. To a Parliamentary Protestant, the *Antient Fathers* can't be such a *Rule*, because they are Accounted fallible.

Ans. We never said they were such a *Rule*. This therefore is Im pertinent.

Pap. Nor *Councils*, because they also are accounted fallible.

Ans.

Ans. This is Impertinent also: for we never said they were our *Rule of Faith*. But we have better Reasons to give, why *Fathers and Councils* cannot be our *Rule of Faith*, than this that the Disputer has made for us. And one is this, That we cannot make them the *Rule of our Faith*, but by so doing, we must depart from the *Primitive Fathers*, and the *ancient Councils*; in as much as all agree, That the *Holy Scriptures* are the *Rule of Faith*, and they made it theirs.

Pap. Nor *Scriptures* senced by a fallible *Authority*, because all such *Interpretations* may be false.

Ans. This is the Place, where I shall tell the Disputer, what we believe, and why we believe it. And when I have done, I shall consider whether he hath said any thing in this clause, to shake our Assurance. We firmly believe all the *Articles of the Creed*, into the Profession whereof, we have been Baptized. We moreover believe all other *Doctrine*, that is *Revealed in Holy Scriptures*.

The *Grounds* of this our Faith, are these, That in the *Holy Scriptures* are Recorded, those Testimonies of *Divine Revelation*, by which the *Doctrines* therein contained, are confirmed. That these Testimonies were too notorious and Publick to be gainsaid; in so much that the *Doctrine*, built upon them, could not be overthrown by the Powers of the world engaged against it. That the holy Books were written by the *Inspired Preachers* of that *Doctrine*, which they contain; And that for this we have the *Testimony of Universal and uncontrollable Tradition*, which is a thing credible of it self. This is the Sum of that *External Evidence*, upon which our Faith is grounded. In assigning of which, I do by no means exclude

exclude that *Internal Evidence*, that arises from the Excellent Goodness of the Doctrines themselves, which shews them to be worthy of God.

Now whereas this Disputer says, That these *Scriptures* cannot be an *Infallible Rule* to us, because they are *sensed by a fallible Authority*, that is, because we, who are *fallible*, understand them as well as we can.

1 John 2.
25.
And Chap.
5-3.

I answer, That no man needs to be *Infallible*, in order to the understanding of *plain Scripture*. I who do not pretend to *Infallibility*, am yet *certain*, which is enough for me, That I do find the *Articles of the Creed* in the *Scriptures*, and many other Doctrines besides, which I do understand. I am sure that I know what these words of St. John signifie, *This is the Promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. And, this is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments*; and the like. The *Antient Fathers* thought the *Scriptures* to be so plain, that they argued out of them, without pretending to an *Infallible Authority of Interpretation*, as I will shew this Disputer when he pleases. If nothing less than *Infallibility* will serve to understand, or as he says, to *sense* words, why does this Disputer put into my hands, this *Paper* of his; which is none of the plainest neither? I am sure he does not take me to be *Infallible*, and yet I am confident he would be angry, if I should say his *Paper* was not to be understood without an *Infallible Interpreter*; let him answer this if he can.

The Reason he gives, why *Scripture sensed by a fallible Authority*, cannot be the *Rule of Faith*, is; because, all such Interpretations may be false,
That

That is to say, because, there is a bare Possibility of any fallible man's mistaking the sense of plain Texts. Which kind of Reasoning makes impossible, that every man should come to be a Believer, unless himself be first Infallible. And this I shall Demonstrate so plainly, that no man who has any share of Understanding and modesty shall be able to deny it.

There is no possible way, for any sort of Christians, to make known either the *Articles or Reasons of Faith*, to those that are yet Ignorant of them, but by words, or sentences, written or spoken. He who hears or reads the words and Sentences, cannot tell either what is to believe, or why he should believe, till he understands or (in the Disputers Phrase) till he *Senses those words and Sentences* ; but as yet his *Authority* is but fallible ; and words *sensed by a Fallible Authority* can never give a man certainty, either of the *Rule, or of the Reason of his Faith* ; If this Disputer be in the Right, therefore 'tis impossible to make him a Believer, unless you can make him *Infallible* first, that it may not be *Possible* for him, to be mistaken, in *Sensing* the words which he hears or reads. And thus farewell to all Advantage that any man can have by the *Infallibility of Popes and Councils, or Oral Tradition*, as well as by the *Scriptures* ; Nay, and to all Possible means of arriving to *certainty* in any matter of Faith, unless every body be *Infallible* first ; so that upon supposition that God would have all men to be saved, and therefore to believe ; it inavoidably follows from the wild Reasoning of this man, that God has made every Man *Infallible*. But if it be evident, that men are fallible Creatures, then
this

this Disputer has Advanced a Principle the most destructive to all *certainty of Faith*, that ever was heard of in the world. But the comfort is, that 'tis so very absurd that no body, well in his wits, can be misled by it.

Pap. *And therefore Faith cannot be obtain'd by any such means.*

Ans. Which is as much as to say, that Faith cannot be obtain'd, till a man have the gift of *Infallibility*; And if every man has it before he can be taught to any purpose, what need can there be of an *Infallible Interpreter* to teach him? But, as I observed before; 'tis impossible to make *Believers* of those that are not *Infallible*, unless the Disputer, or his *Church*, has a way to make known the *Doctrines* and *Reasons* of *Christian Faith*, without words.

Pap. *For that which is doubtful can only create opinion, which is also doubtful.*

Ans. Therefore since all words are doubtful to him that has but a *fallible Authority* to sense them, as no man has more, before he believes; 'tis impossible for the Disputers Church to create any thing more than opinion, (*which is also doubtful*) in those whom she teaches, unless as I have already said, she can make them *Infallible* first, and teach them afterwards. And even then there would be no need of teaching them at all, because they are now *Infallible* themselves. Of all the *Papers* that ever I read, I never met with any thing more absurd, and contradictory than the Reasoning of this; In which the Disputer, out of a vehement desire to overthrow our Faith, and the Grounds of it, has laid down *Principles* that do effectually overthrow all ways of making
men

men sure of any thing ; and in particular, the use of those very methods by which his own Church pretends to lead men to Faith.

Pap. *And be that doubts in Faith (the Apostle saith) is Infidelis, and a company of Doubters are not a Church of Faithful, but a society of such as the Apostle calls Infidels.*

Ans. What *Apostle* says this? if the *Disputer* refers to *Rom. 14. 23.* as I think he does, he has shewn his skill in the *Interpretation of Scripture*, to be equal to his mastery in *Reasoning*. If in the *Infallible Church* they can *Interpret Scripture* no better than thus, give me the honesty and industry of a *Fallible Church*, before it.

The Conclusion.

AN D now after all, this Paper is as absurd in the design, as it is in the management ; for the business of it is to prove, That *Protestants* have no Faith, but are *Infidels* ; and that by this Argument they are and must be *doubters* : Now whether I *doubt*, or *do not doubt*, is a *Question* concerning a *matter of Fact* that I have more reason to know the truth of, than the *Disputer* can possibly have ; and if I know that I *do not doubt*, and he can yet prove that I *do doubt*, he is an extraordinary man indeed. For then I am sure he can prove, That *Truth* not onely may be, but is false, which perhaps such a man as he can Reconcile with what he said at first, *That truths are impossible to be false.*

And this alone had been a sufficient *Answer* to his Paper ; for nothing can be more frivolous, than

than to go about to prove to a man by fine Reasoning, that he does *doubt* of a thing, when it is as sure, that he does *not doubt* of it, as he can be of any thing in the World. But the design of this Paper seems to be as *Impious*, as 'tis *Absurd*. And that is, to bring weak Persons to *Infidels* first, that they may afterwards be settled upon *Romish Grounds*. I do acknowledg 'tis a very proper way, to bring us over to the Church of Rome, to make us *Infidels* first; But this they will not find so easy a matter; for we trust that we are not of those *who draw back to Perdition*, but of those that believe to the saving the Soul.

I have omitted nothing in the whole Paper, but to take notice of that little and mean Reflection in calling the Protestant, a *Parliamentary Protestant*. I have told this *Disputer*, the Reason and Ground of our Faith: If we moreover are Protected in the Profession of it, by the *Laws* of the Land, I suppose 'tis no more than what he would desire for the Profession of *Popery*; and he would think never the worse of himself, for being a *Parliamentary Papist*.

Thus I have Answered this Paper through every clause of it. And I am confident destroy'd all that little Appearance of Reasoning that it made. Let the *Disputer* build it up again if he can, I promise him, by God's Grace, that I'll pull it down again.

F I N I S.